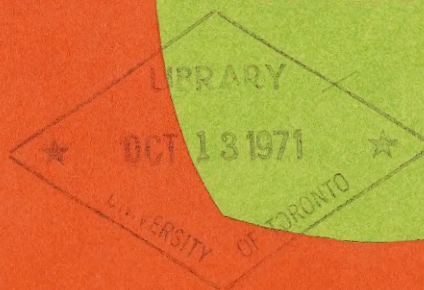


3 1761 11556507 9

General publications

Posture and Rest Positions


for Expectant Mothers



Child and maternal health division

A publication of the Department of National Health and Welfare,
Canada

CA1
Hw
-Z110



Digitized by the Internet Archive
in 2022 with funding from
University of Toronto

<https://archive.org/details/31761115565079>

Posture and Rest Positions for Expectant Mothers

Rest, relaxation and good muscle tone will contribute to your comfort and general well-being during pregnancy.

Effective breathing promotes relaxation. If you are relaxed and in a comfortable position your rest periods will be of greater benefit.

This pamphlet contains suggestions for breathing, rest positions and exercises designed—

- To improve the functioning of your body.

- To help you relax and rest comfortably.

- To improve muscle tone.

- To encourage and maintain good posture.

To help you carry your baby more comfortably.

To prepare you for the efforts of labor.

The breathing techniques and relaxation positions will be of help to all mothers, but before practising the relaxation exercises discuss them with your doctor. Your doctor will suggest when during pregnancy you can start learning the exercises, which ones you should do and how frequently you should practise.

Classes for expectant mothers are available in many communities. Your doctor, health department or visiting nurse will know if they are available in your community.

BREATHING TECHNIQUES

DEEP OR COMPLETE BREATH—to aid in circulation, to promote a feeling of wellbeing and to relax.

Blow air out, then breathe in deeply and slowly. Chest wall and rib cage expand as lungs are filled to capacity. Abdominal wall remains relaxed. After three deep or complete breaths mother should relax and breathe naturally.

Fig. 1



PANTING—useful at the end of the second stage of labor as baby's head is being born.

With mouth open breathe in and out quickly, letting breast bone rise and fall. Pant for a short period then breathe normally and repeat as necessary.



Fig. 2

ABDOMINAL BREATHING—of value during the first stage of labor, at the time of a contraction.

Relax completely.

Blow air out, then breathe in slowly to allow diaphragm to move down and raise abdominal wall. Chest should not expand as in deep breath. Breathe in slowly then breathe out slowly.

RELAXATION POSITIONS

BACK LYING POSITION (for early pregnancy)

Pillow under head and under knees.

Arm relaxed with elbows slightly bent.

Take two or three deep, complete breaths, relax, then breathe naturally.

Fig. 3



SIDE LYING POSITION (for later pregnancy and during first stage of labor). Pillow under head, corner pulled around to support shoulder and arm and to remove pressure from breasts —abdomen supported by mattress—legs flexed

—upper leg resting on bed—under arm at back—deep, complete breathing, relax, then breathe naturally. (Some mothers will be more comfortable with a pillow under the leg.)

Fig. 4



LEG ELEVATION—to improve circulation in lower extremities and to help prevent or relieve the discomfort of varicose veins.



Fig. 5

LEGS AND FEET SLIGHTLY ELEVATED—

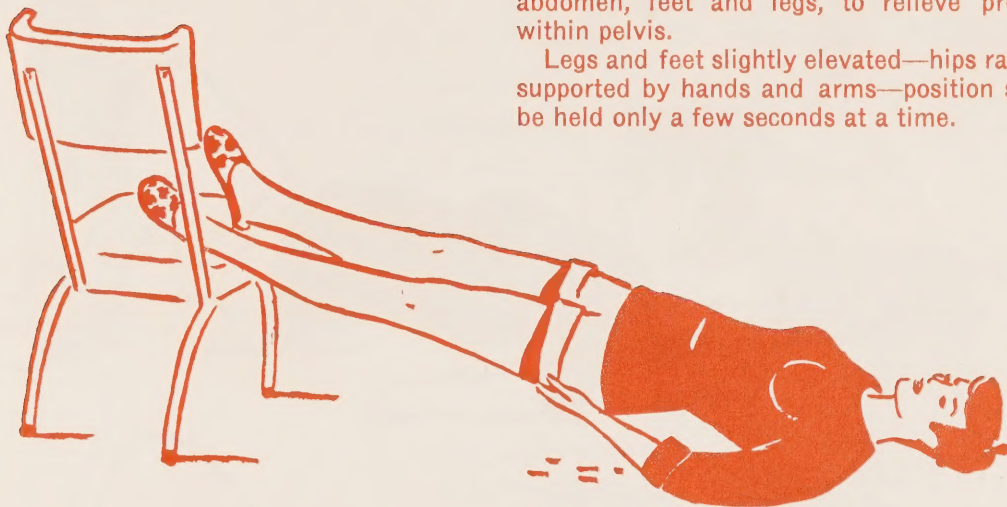
This same position with slight elevation of the legs and feet may be achieved by placing two

firm pillows under the feet and lower part of the legs and one pillow under the thighs. A pillow under the head provides additional comfort.

Fig. 6

HIP RAISING—to improve circulation in pelvis, abdomen, feet and legs, to relieve pressure within pelvis.

Legs and feet slightly elevated—hips raised—supported by hands and arms—position should be held only a few seconds at a time.



This same position without the effort of raising the hips by hands and arms may be achieved by placing a board sloping from chair to floor. An ironing board or piece of heavy plywood covered with a blanket makes a soft surface on which the

mother can lie. A pillow under the head provides additional comfort. For safety, choose a chair with rubber tips or place the chair against the wall to prevent it slipping when getting into or lying in this comfort position.

RELAXATION EXERCISES

PELVIC ROCKING—to relax and to improve tone of muscles of lower back and abdomen, to promote flexibility of pelvic joint, to improve posture and prevent backache.

- (a) Lying down on firm surface, knees bent—tighten buttocks and lower abdominal

muscles—back flattened—spine straight. Relax muscles—lower back—relaxed. Repeat slowly and rhythmically four or five times.



Fig. 7





Fig. 8

- (b) Standing—tighten buttocks and lower abdominal muscles—pelvis rocked up—head up—chest up—maintain for good posture and to prevent backache.



Fig. 9

- (c) On hands and knees—arms straight—hands in line with shoulders, knees level with hips—tighten buttocks and abdominal muscles—lower back humped. Relax muscles—lower back slightly hollowed. (Position may be used to relieve pain in lower back)

PELVIC TWIST—to improve tone of muscles of abdominal wall.

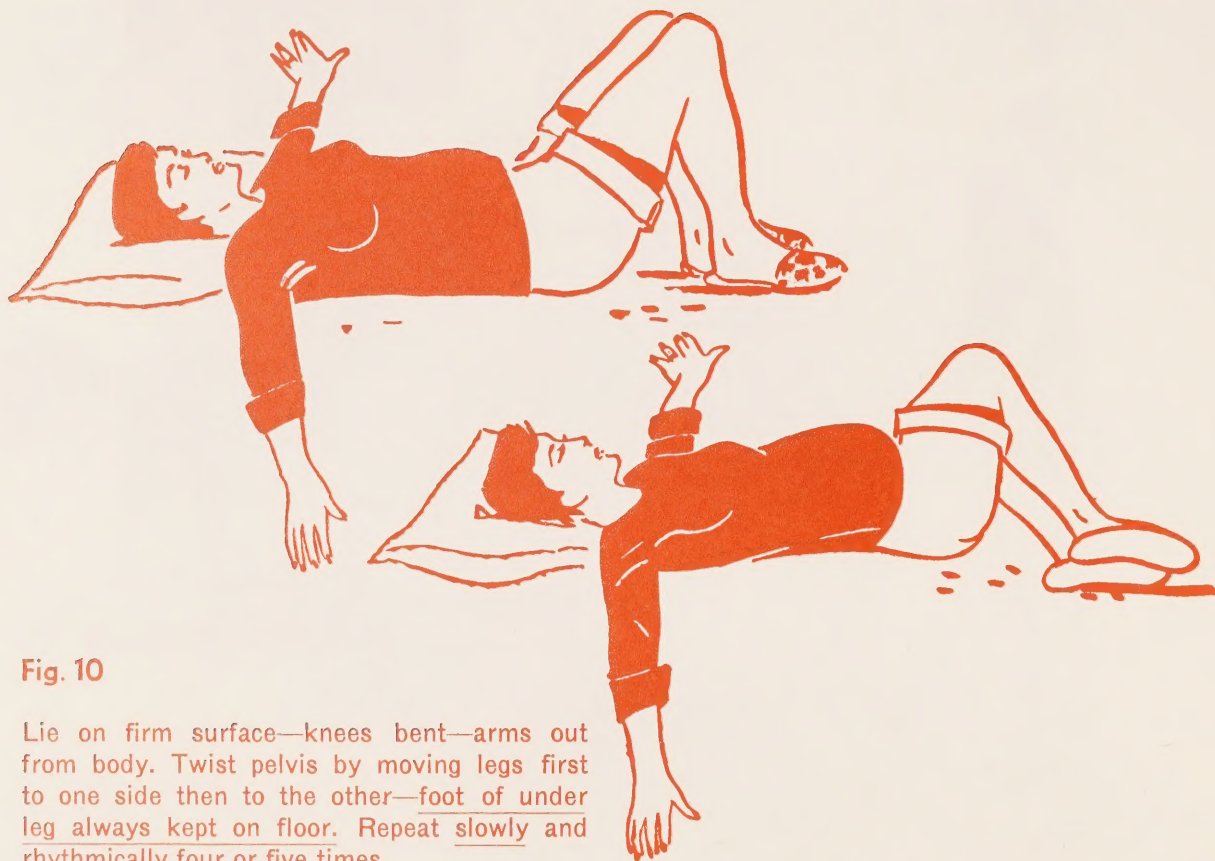


Fig. 10

Lie on firm surface—knees bent—arms out from body. Twist pelvis by moving legs first to one side then to the other—foot of under leg always kept on floor. Repeat slowly and rhythmically four or five times.

TAILOR SIT—to improve muscle tone so that thighs can be separated without discomfort at time of delivery.

Fig. 11



Fig. 12

SQUATTING—to stretch and improve tone of muscles in pelvic floor and to conserve energy and prevent backache by squatting instead of stooping.



CHILD AND MATERNAL HEALTH DIVISION

Published by authority of
The Honourable John Munro
Minister of National Health and Welfare

Maurice LeClair, M.D.
Deputy Minister of National Health

Joseph W. Willard
Deputy Minister of National Welfare

© Information Canada, Ottawa, 1971

Cat. No.: H 53-1068